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Norfolk County Council

Big Norfolk

Holiday Fun



Big Norfolk Holiday Fun
(Holiday Activities and Food)

Annual Report: April 25-March 26

Contents

Welcome	3
Mapping Demand	4
Achievements	5
Delivery	6
Food Provision	7
Food Education	8
Enrichment	9
Physical Activities	10
Quotes	11
Reflections	12
Marketing	13
Safeguarding	14
Partnerships	15
Expenditure	16
Provider List	17

Welcome

Welcome to the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun's 2025-2026 Annual Report!

Welcome to our annual report for the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun (BNHF) programme. As a national initiative, BNHF is fully funded by the Department for Education and plays a vital role in supporting children and their families during the main school holidays. This report covers the delivery of the programme which took place in Easter, summer and winter 2025.

What is BNHF?

The BNHF programme, also known nationally as Holiday Activities and Food (HAF), focuses on two essential cornerstones:

- 1. Activities for All:** We offer a diverse range of activities, from multi-sports and dance to theatre and arts and crafts. These engaging experiences are designed for children aged 4 to 16 in Norfolk.
- 2. Nutritious Meals:** Children eligible for benefits-related free school meals can claim free spaces on our activities. Additionally, all participants receive a nutritious free meal as part of the programme.

Our providers and their impact

Our dedicated providers have risen to the challenge of delivering not only physical activities but also tasty food and education on nutrition. Their efforts have resulted in great survey scores from participating families, demonstrating the success of this unique combination.

Making a difference

BNHF has assisted over 6,000 of our county's most vulnerable children this year. By providing access to food and fun, we contribute significantly to their wellbeing. The impact of this support is evidenced in the feedback received from parents, providers, and the children and young people themselves, examples of which are shared in this report.

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to everyone who supports the delivery of this important programme. Their hard work and commitment shine through in this report. Enjoy exploring the results and thank you for being part of Big Norfolk Holiday Fun.

Eve Dewsnap, Director, Active Norfolk

Mapping demand

We've taken a data-led approach to enhance the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun (BNHF) provision.

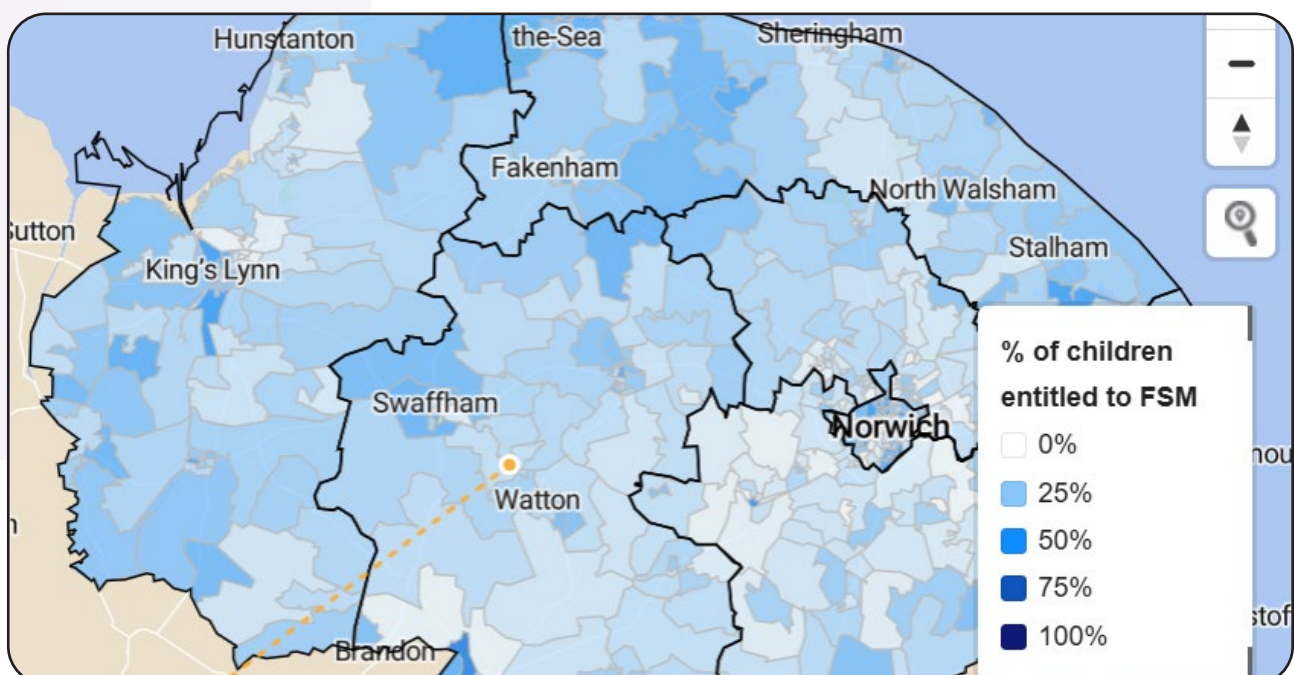
By mapping postcodes of children who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM), we gain valuable insights that inform our decision-making process.

How it works

The postcodes collected serve as essential markers for understanding the distribution of vulnerable children across Norfolk. We overlay the details of the provider applications received. By aligning these applications with the FSM maps, we can assess the suitability of proposed activities based on various factors.

Criteria for mapping provision:

- **Location:** We consider the geographical distribution of both FSM-children and proposed activity providers. We've also factored in provision for more rural areas, ensuring equitable access across the region.
- **Price:** Evaluating the cost of activities helps us strike a balance between affordability and quality.
- **Target Audience:** We tailor activities to different age ranges and children with SEND, ensuring inclusivity.
- **Nature of Activity:** Whether it's sports, arts, or educational programmes, we assess the variety and suitability of offerings.



Achievements

No. of children attended/places attended



3,178

Easter

Total places booked: 9,989

4,020

Summer

Total places booked: 21,134

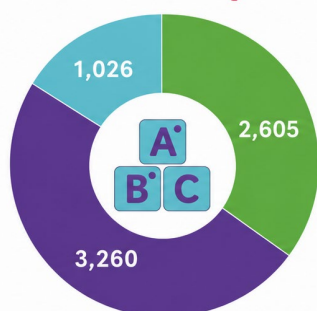
1,387

Winter

Total places booked: 3,223

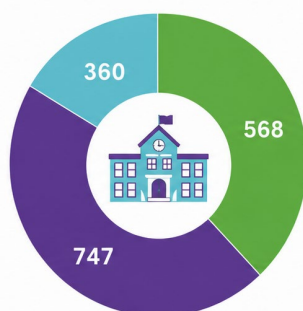
No. of children by age and with SEND

Primary



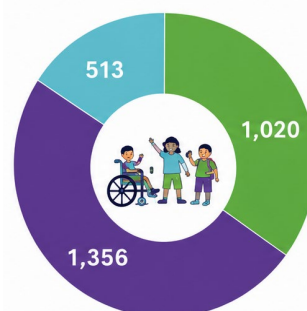
Easter	2,605
Summer	3,260
Winter	1,026

Secondary



Easter	568
Summer	747
Winter	360

SEND



Easter	1,020
Summer	1,356
Winter	513

Each ring shows the number of children who attended in the **EASTER**, **SUMMER**, and **WINTER** programmes.

Delivery

Over the past year, we have continued to work with partners and families to improve the BNHF offer.

SEND Provision:

Across 13 providers, 2009 specialist SEND places were offered, responding to the high demand we have seen from families for this provision. Overall attendance of SEND children also continued to improve to 31% (having increased from 29% between 2024 and 2025).

Secondary School Age Take-Up:

Last year we reported an increase in secondary school-age take-up, from 11% at Easter 2022 to 25% at Easter 2023. In 2024-25 this has dropped back again to 13%. In response, we have sought new providers for 2024-25 programme to provide a more diverse range of activities for young people. Secondary school take-up in 2025-26 was 16%.



Food Provision

Meals were provided with all activities, including snacks and refreshments.

Many activity providers either cooked in-house or used local food suppliers. Some providers experienced challenges including lack of facilities at venues and meeting specialist dietary needs. Several providers partnered with Fresh Food for Now, a recommended local food supplier, where they lacked skills or facilities to meet the required standards.

Food Safety and Hygiene:

47 provider delivery staff received Free Food and Hygiene Level 2 courses. This ensured safe food handling in line with guidelines.

Children's Attitudes:

Across three programmes, 85% of children enjoyed the food and were satisfied with portion size

- 72% said that they 'had enough food'
- 65% had 'enjoyed the food'
- Only 51% said that they had learned about healthy eating, so we will be looking to improve on this next year



Food Education

To complement the nutritious meals the children and young people enjoyed, we sought to empower participants and their families by providing nutritional education to encourage healthy food choices and cooking at home. A qualified family nutritionist attended our provider forum and shared tips on involving children and young people and healthy recipes to try with participants.

40% of families reported an increase in healthy eating habits

Provider activity examples for nutrition education:

- One provider ran a nutrition workshop on healthy snacks, which was a highlight and made a real difference. We used a rollercoaster video to demonstrate how sugar affects the body, ups and downs etc.
- We had one child who is 7 and doesn't eat many solid foods and has a very limited diet. He really enjoyed the visit to the fruit market, choosing his own fruit to make a smoothie, he helped make the smoothie and then drank it all. He was very proud of this and his mother was delighted.



Impact and Attitude Change:

- Peer-to-peer support encouraged providers to exchange ideas during drop-in sessions, fostering creativity and sharing successful approaches.
- Over the programme duration, attitudes toward healthy eating evolved positively.
- Participants gained a better understanding of nutrition, including healthy eating and food budgeting.

Enrichment

Big Norfolk Holiday Fun offers diverse activities beyond sports, including filmmaking, robot-making, coding, drama, music, dance, trips, family events, and behind-the-scenes experiences at a local zoo.

Our focus has been to provide a variety of opportunities for children and young people to learn and engage in fun environments. Movement and staying active is an indirect benefit. This approach has proven successful, especially in reaching children who haven't previously participated in conventional sporting activities. The programme's varied offer and personalised approach contributed to positive outcomes for participants.

Top rated programme benefits

1. *The activities*
2. *The people delivering activities*
3. *Learning new things*
4. *Getting out of the house*
5. *Spending time with friends*

Impact examples from our providers:

- On her first day, a six-year-old girl arrived feeling very shy. Despite having never played the ukulele before, she quickly excelled, learning all three chords with ease. As her confidence grew throughout the session, she became increasingly engaged and proud of her achievement. She was especially delighted when we shared her progress with her mum, who was equally pleased to hear how well she had done.
- Our boat trip was a huge success and brought so much joy to the children. One family told us their child was absolutely thrilled, it was their first time ever on a boat, and the experience left them amazed. Time and again, families tell us how much the children enjoy spending time with us, and hearing feedback like this reinforces just how meaningful these opportunities are.
- A child with SEND arrived late to the session and was initially unsettled. The team responded with patience and understanding, providing tailored support and engaging the child in an activity that reflected their interests. This helped the child feel comfortable, participate fully, and enjoy the session. The parent later expressed how pleased they were with the team's inclusive approach, sharing that they had been worried their child might not settle and that they would need to leave early.

The programme's varied offerings and personalised approach contributed to positive outcomes for participants.

Physical Activities

Physical activities included swimming, cycling, gymnastics, sailing and paddleboarding, nature walks and activity centres, as well as more traditional team sports such as football.

Provider Story

A child was withdrawn from their football team due to challenges with temper and anger on the pitch. However, after attending both the winter and Easter camps, their mum shared that these experiences had a significant positive impact, helping them to rediscover that football is meant to be enjoyable. The family have now enrolled in a three-week trial of weekly sessions, with a view to continuing support in developing a more positive mindset in football.

92% of parents plan to use BNHF again

54% of families reported an increase in physical activity levels among children and young people who had attended BNHF activities.

Provider Story

A young girl with Down's syndrome attended our SEND karate session for the first time during the holiday period. Having previously lacked the confidence to try karate, she was initially unsure on arrival. However, with support from our instructors and encouragement from her peers, she quickly settled and began to enjoy the activities.

Following this positive first experience, she went on to book and attend every session throughout the holiday. Over this time, we saw a significant growth in her confidence; she became increasingly engaged with instructors, developed friendships with other children, and gained a strong sense of achievement through her participation.

Her family shared how delighted they were to see her so motivated and included, and she is now looking forward to continuing her journey by attending our weekly SEN class once the BNHF sessions conclude.

“My child had a great time and wanted to come back again, he made new friends and even ate his pitta lunch that he'd made.”

Quotes

Behind every booking is a child discovering new opportunities, a family finding support, and a parent feeling reassured. These comments, shared by families across the Easter, Summer and Winter programmes, capture the real impact of Big Norfolk Holiday Fun.



LIFE-CHANGING / ESSENTIAL SUPPORT

“

This has been a life saver for me... my son has also really enjoyed his time there and met many friends.”

“

It's a life saver... my daughter's behaviour was improved during the 6 week holiday.”

“

I don't know what would have been of us if there wasn't an option like this.”



SUPPORTING WORKING FAMILIES & FINANCES

“

Was able to continue with work.”

“

Being a single parent... it has been difficult to find childcare... this has been a life saver.”

“

Helped us financially... we were unable to have a holiday this year.”

“

Doing things I could afford to do for 4 children.”



CHILDREN'S HAPPINESS & WELLBEING

“

My boy has had the best time... his days are filled with happiness and random laughter.”

“

My child was happier after going to the activities.”

“

They are happy to go even though they often don't know anyone.”



CONFIDENCE, SOCIAL SKILLS & INCLUSION

“

He really thrives when there's a chance to socialise with other kids.”

“

Gives my child an opportunity to socialise.”

“

They learn new skills and make friends.”



LEARNING & BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

“

They learn new skills they would otherwise not have the chance to learn.”

“

Helped exhaust them and kept them fit.”

“

My son has learnt to be confident... and around new people.”



GRATITUDE & EMOTIONAL IMPACT

“

We as a family are immensely grateful.”

“

We're just so grateful!”

“

Please don't stop now.”

“

These powerful words reflect the real difference Big Norfolk Holiday Fun makes every day.



Reflections

We strive to continuously improve Big Norfolk Holiday Fun. We survey providers, parents, and children after every delivery and the feedback helps to identify where we can make further improvements. We also set up a Provider Advisory Group to consult with providers about future changes to the programme.

Our priorities for improvement this year have been to:

- reach more eligible families
- to improve attendance rates
- to expand and improve provision for children with SEND

To reach more families we have:

- Sent a letter via schools to every eligible family to tell them about the scheme and how they can get involved
- Worked closely with staff in Family Hubs to enable them to support eligible families to attend
- Developed links with the School Attendance Team and Youth Justice Team to enable them to signpost eligible children and young people to the programme

We have implemented several measures to reduce the number of paid for places which are unused:

- Reducing the number of paid places for some providers/venues where attendance data is consistently low
- Direct contact from providers with families before activities start
- Providers following up with families when children don't attend booked sessions
- Where there are repeated "no shows" with no legitimate reason, future booked sessions are cancelled

Around a third of all children and young people attending BNHF have Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. We have been working with our providers to ensure BNHF is as inclusive as possible:

- Free training for all providers on inclusive practice and managing behaviour
- More providers with SEND specific sessions in addition to their mainstream activities
- New SEND specific providers to meet the needs of more children

Marketing

We effectively engaged families, schools, providers, and other stakeholders. Our strategic approach looked to target the most vulnerable children in the region. Below are few examples of our successful campaign.

Targeted Communications:

- **Email:** We directly contacted families on the Norfolk County Council Free School Meal database asking them to opt-in to our Big Norfolk Holiday Fun newsletter. We have built a contact database of over 10,000 individuals.
- **Social:** We leveraged social advertising using Mosaic database information to reach our target areas within Norfolk.

Provider Promotion:

- **Marketing Materials for Providers:** These packs included printable and editable flyers, posters, social media assets and copy. Canva templates were created, like the example below, for providers to use and share.

Other Channels:

- Local radio spots and local paper advertisements provided additional visibility.



Safeguarding

Key developments included the introduction of the CPOMS safeguarding management system, the establishment of a seven-member Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) network, mandatory provider safeguarding briefings, and enhanced quality assurance. These changes have created a more consistent, proactive approach to safeguarding, with clear escalation pathways and stronger partnership working.

The impact has been significant:

- 92 safeguarding incidents were managed and appropriately responded to across the programme in 2025.
- All providers are now members of the Safer Programme, with safeguarding policies reviewed and approved.
- Providers report greater confidence in recognising concerns, making referrals, and working with Family Hubs, CADS and Early Help services.
- Case studies demonstrate improved support for children with SEND, stronger family engagement, and more effective multi-agency working.
- The safeguarding model has been recognised by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit as an example of national best practice.

Importantly, these improvements extend beyond the holiday programme. Enhanced safeguarding knowledge, systems and partnerships are now embedded across Norfolk's community organisations, creating a lasting legacy of safer practice for children and young people throughout the year.

Partnerships

The objectives of BNHF align with those of many other organisations. We have sought to collaborate with partners to enhance the impact of the programme and leverage additional funding.

Bikeability

- We have formed a valuable partnership with the Bikeability team who have supported us with additional funding for bikeability courses, enabling 29 children to complete their Level 1 and Level 2 in bikeability certificates.

Wrap Around Care

- We have been sharing learning, insights and provider networks with the Norfolk County Council team responsible for implementing the Wrap Around Care scheme. We have established a working group to ensure that there is joined-up working across these programmes locally.



Expenditure

We secured grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to administer the Holiday Activities and Food programme in Norfolk.

The Department for Education allocates a budget to each Local Authority based on the number of children eligible for benefits-related free school meals in each area. The grant covers the provision of free holiday places and local programme administration (up to 10% of the grant).

For the 2025 to 2026 financial year, Norfolk County Council was awarded a DfE grant of £2,759,560, of which our expenditure was £2,621,837.49.

2024-2025

	<i>Easter</i>	<i>Summer</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Face to Face Holiday Club Provision</i>	£633,628	£1,269,394	£255,602	£2,158,624
<i>Remote Holiday Club Provision</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
<i>Publishing the Scheme</i>	£18,719	£15,563	£31,047	£65,329
<i>Capital Expenditure</i>	£0	£0	£0	£0
<i>Management and Administration</i>	£91,985	£91,985	£91,985	£275,956
<i>Other costs</i>	£3,279	£21,914	£96,734	£121,927
<i>Total Expenditure</i>	£655,625	1,306,872	£383,383	£2,738,156

Provider List

Able2B CIC	Limelight Theatre Company
Action Community Enterprises CIC (ACE)	Little Footsteps of Dereham
Alive West	Little Footsteps Of Mattishall LTD
Aylsham High School	Little Miracles
Banham Zoo	Little Rider's Cycle Training Ltd
Broadland District Council (tots2teens)	Mad Science Norfolk
Broadway Bella's	Mr Bees Family Centre Springwood
Bush Adventures UK CIC	National Tennis Association
Chapel Break OSC CIC	Natural Wonder/Extraordinary Communities
Cookies Kitchen	New Routes Integration
Dereham Education & Soccer Academy	New Stages
East Anglia Gymnastics	Next Thing Education Camps Ltd
East Dereham Day Nursery	Norfolk Active Kidz
East Norfolk Sixth Form College	Norfolk and Suffolk Music Hub
Eastern Shotokan Association (ESKA)	Norfolk Hoopstars
Echo Youth Theatre	Norwich City Community Sports Foundation
Engage Sports Coaching	NR Foundation
EP Youth Ltd	Pav Fun Ball Academy
Everyone Active	Pilot IMS
Extra Time at Robert Kett Primary School	Playdays Plus
Fen Zen CIC	Premier Education
Football Fun Factory (013) - Trevor Daniels	Ruth Stanley Childcare
Football Fun Factory (046) - Adam Reeve	Summers Childcare
Football Fun Factory (046) - Adam Reeve	Sunbeams Community Hub
Football Fun Factory (048) - Lewis Moore	Sunbeams Play
Football Fun Factory (078) - Tyler Boldero	Sunflower After School Club
Girlguiding Anglia - Hautbois Activity Centre	The Beehive Childcare Group
Go Geronimo CIC	The Benjamin Foundation - Kidzone
Green Lizard Wood CIC	The Bread Kitchen CIC
Henderson Trust	The Playden Childminding
Holt Youth Project	The Treasure Box
ICS Coaching Ltd	Time Childcare
Joanna Simpson (Childminder)	Top Banana
JW Sports and Fitness	Traquinas Childcare
Koala Klubs	Woodrow Childminding
LB Coaching Ltd	



Norfolk County Council

Sign up to receive Big Norfolk Holiday Fun emails.
Be the first to hear when booking opens and get regular updates
and news about the Big Norfolk Holiday Fun scheme
www.norfolk.gov.uk/bignorfolkholidayfun